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THE INFORMANT

An interdisciplinary newsletter distributed by the Department of Linguistics at Western Michigan University to provide information about developments in linguistics to students, staff, and friends in the field.

Mystery Ballad

A member of the English Department—who will go unnamed until our next issue—has furnished us with a ready-made 'mystery' problem. It consists of several stanzas excerpted from two different sections of a nineteenth century ballad. The problem is to identify the language and the dialect and to produce a rough translation of the text. We'll give you a hint: it belongs to the Norse twig of the Germanic branch of an Indo-European family. The first person to present us with the desired information will be referred to the English Department for his reward.

Selamon læt sær klæði skera,
tí hann skyldi brulleypp gera.

Hann beyð up á bríkar
mangar menn og ríkar.

Hann beyð til so mangan mann,
kongins son af Engelland

Selamon man teinkja:
frillan hon skal skeinkja.

.

Tann fyrsta svövn, fö selamon fár,
frillan á hans armi lá.

Tann fyrsta svövn, fö selamon fekk,
frillan af hans armi gekk.

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Our November 1969 mystery problem—the five houses—proved to be so popular that we lost track of who finally solved it. Our incomplete records show that the secretaries on the fourth floor of Sprau Tower—Mrs. Elaine Moyer, Mrs. Monica Snyder, and Miss Blanche De Horn—all worked it out before it was printed. After publication, however, the first Linguistics majors to get the answer (which we will

never reveal) were Mickey Tesanovich and Jan Lowry, though other interested students were not far behind: Barbara Malczewska, Mary Lois Howard (and friend Bill), Barbara Bondar, Neil Kirschner, and Hart Guenther.

The first faculty and staff to get into the act were Professor Joe Ellin (Chairman of the Department of Philosophy), Mr. Ted Marvin (Administrative Assistant in the School of General Studies), and Mrs. Lucille Sayles (Secretary of Alumni Relations). Professor Ellin reported his solution in a delightful letter that described the problem as "logically rigorous but monumentally trivial." His method of attack consisted of "brute force," "trial and error," "lots of crossings out," and "an afternoon and evening." We accept the monumental triviality of the problem, but we can't figure out where a department head got a free afternoon and evening. (He must know something we don't know.)

The most spectacular of the solvings was performed by Hart Guenther, a student in Introduction to Linguistics last semester. Hart began to work on the problem when the November Informant was first handed out in class. Seven (7) minutes later, he had the correct answer. That must be some kind of a record. It isn't so surprising, though, if you know Hart (or 'Mr. Chips', as he was affectionately known in class, because of his mustache). He is a resident of Germany, a graduate student in the Psychology Department, a researcher at the Fort Custer State Home, and a future psycholinguist. He is also one of the authors of the following report on the Language Acquisition Program.

Language Acquisition Program
(A report by Hartmut Guenther and Diane Klein)

"For the past two years a research project in the area of language acquisition in the mentally retarded has been in project at the Fort Custer State Home in Augusta, Michigan. The project is funded by various agencies and is currently under the direction of Dr. Louise Kent, assistant professor of psychology at Western Michigan University. While primarily designed as a research project, the Language Acquisition Program also provides a service to a number of severely retarded residents of FCSH. The Program teaches attending behavior, vocal and motor imitation, and receptive and expressive vocabulary. The present goal is to program the acquisition of two-word responses and to carefully observe and record extraneous responses (i.e. responses which were not programmed). Once the data are collected, verbal responses are subjected to linguistic analysis using transformational grammar models.

"The attempt to program the complex task of language - including phonetic, morphemic, syntactic and semantic performance - requires the consideration of several theoretical and methodological problems. The foremost of these problems is to what extent normal and deviant children differ in the process of language acquisition. Linguistic analysis of verbal responses should shed a great deal of light on this question. A second problem is that of "errorless learning." The proper sequencing of behaviors to be learned and the number of differentiated responses to be taught along any one continuum are two important factors in the design of an "errorless" program. The teaching of vocal imitation has also provided a number of problems. The ability to imitate detached phonemes has been assumed an important prerequisite of syllable and word imitation; this assumption has not been substantiated in this program and is currently under investigation."

Professor Ronald Wardhaugh

The Linguistics Department has assumed (from the former Language and Linguistics Forum) the responsibility for inviting a distinguished linguist to the campus each year to speak on a topic of interdisciplinary interest. This year's speaker is Professor Ronald Wardhaugh of the University of Michigan: Director of the English Language Institute; Acting Director of the Center for Research on Language and Language Behavior; former editor of Language Learning (a journal of applied linguistics); Associate Professor of Linguistics and Lecturer in the School of Education; and author of numerous articles and reviews and the recent book Reading: A Linguistic Perspective.

As you can see, Professor Wardhaugh's interests range broadly over the field of applied linguistics; reading; second language teaching; psycholinguistics; English linguistics; language arts; composition; phonics; etc. He will speak on the topic "Linguistics and Teaching" on Thursday, April 9 at 4 o'clock in the Faculty Lounge of the Student Center. Coffee and cookies will be served at 3 o'clock (first come, first served) so that you will have a chance to meet him informally before the lecture. If you need further information, call Dr. Hendriksen (3-0958), who is in charge of the program.

English as a Foreign Language

Dr. Daniel Hendriksen, Coordinator of English as a Foreign Language in the Linguistics Department, has recently conducted a survey of Kalamazoo and Portage schools to ascertain what facilities are available there for teaching English to non-native speakers. A questionnaire was sent out to thirty-eight school administrators in Kalamazoo and to five in Portage asking for the number of non-native-speaker students, their general origin, their source of help in learning English, the kind of training possessed by the people who help them, the time and place of the special instruction, the textbooks and other materials used, and an estimate of the adequacy of this help.

The twenty-three questionnaires that were returned reported only twenty-one non-native speakers of English enrolled in these schools (not including thirty adults in the Kalamazoo Community School course). All of them are children of immigrant families and most of them need help in learning English. The help is usually provided by the student's teachers and his fellow students; but additional help is sometimes given by a special teacher (such as a reading teacher), a tutor, or parents and relatives. The special training possessed by the teachers includes work in linguistics, English grammar, reading, and the student's native language. The instruction at school often takes place during school hours. The textbooks used include standard and special English textbooks and parallel texts in the student's language. Additional materials include tapes, records, pictures, charts, films, film strips, and slides. All but one of the school administrators feel that their program is adequate.

In spite of the confidence expressed by the school administrators, both directly (see end of preceding paragraph) and indirectly (over half of them not replying), Dr. Hendriksen receives numerous calls from people in the community who request instruction in English as a foreign language for students of high school

and junior college age. At the moment, for example, tutors are needed for a fifteen-year old Spanish speaker and a nineteen-year old Japanese speaker. The best qualification for this work is successful completion of Linguistics 510, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, which provides each student with supervised tutoring of a non-native speaker. (That course will be offered in the summer by Mr. Dwarikesh and in the fall by Dr. Hendriksen.) If you have taken Linguistics 510 (or are otherwise qualified) and have some time for tutoring, please call Dr. Hendriksen (3-0958) and offer your services. You will be serving the community at the same time that you are strengthening your Linguistics major or minor.

Critical Languages

The Linguistics Department has prepared a preliminary policy statement on critical language offerings which is now being examined by the Institute of International and Area Studies and the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. It will be ready for distribution to advisers sometime in April. That policy statement contains a number of items of interest to Linguistics majors and minors:

1. A C-card is required for all Critical Languages courses (4th floor Sprau).
2. A minimum enrollment of ten (10) is required at preregistration time.
3. Critical Languages courses are open only to juniors, seniors, and graduate students (unless Critical Language minors).
4. A Critical Language can be taken to satisfy the Liberal Arts foreign language requirement (12 credit hours).
5. All Critical Languages courses offer four hours of credit in the Department of Linguistics.
6. Critical Languages courses can be taken for pass/fail (except by Linguistics majors or minors), credit, or audit.

Mr. D. P. S. Dwarikesh, Critical Languages Supervisor in the Linguistics Department announces the following courses for the fall semester 1970:

| <u>Number</u> | <u>Section</u> | <u>Language</u> | <u>Supervisor</u> | <u>Days</u> | <u>Times</u> | <u>Room</u> |
|---------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 505 | AA | Basic Brazilian Portuguese | Palmatier | TTh | 8:00- 9:50 | 3313 Br. |
| 505 | CA | Basic Swahili | Muthiani | TTh | 10:00-11:50 | 3314 Br. |
| 505 | CB | Basic Hindi-Urdu | Dwarikesh | TTh | 10:00-11:50 | 3313 Br. |
| 505 | FA | Basic Japanese | Dwarikesh | MW | 1:00- 2:50 | 3313 Br. |
| 505 | HA | Basic Polish | Sohodski | TTh | 3:00- 4:50 | 3322 Br. |
| 505 | LA | Basic Arabic | Dwarikesh | MW | 7:00- 8:50 | 3315 Br. |
| 507 | IA | Advanced Swahili | Willis | TTh | 4:00- 5:50 | 3314 Br. |

Pluses and Minuses

1. Our student secretary, Miss Blanche De Horn, called in during the March 11 'demonstration' to report that she just got gassed at the Student Center. Now, we were somewhat taken aback by this information, considering the fact that the USC doesn't serve anything harder than coffee; and, anyway, Blanche doesn't seem like the type to be stoned so early in the afternoon. Well, it turned out that she was tear-gassed--while listening to a lecture on air pollution! Think about it.

2. Speaking of demonstrations, the Linguistics faculty is preparing a new Department Constitution, and we are currently recruiting students to protest it in some dramatic fashion. Plastering the Chairman's door with four-phoneme words might work, but we're not sure anybody would want to read them. (Four-letter words all turn out to have three phonemes.) It has been suggested that fifty percent of the faculty could be locked out of their offices, but that would mean that one of the three of us would be caught in the door. Let us know if you have a suggestion. We need the publicity.

3. The December 20, 1969 Commencement program announced the graduation of two of our students. Mrs. Vicky Zych Hopkins, a Linguistics minor and English major, received a B.A. degree in Secondary Education. She has the honor of being our first minor to be married while in the program--and probably the last one to hail from Peyton Place. (That's right: Peyton Place Drive, Kalamazoo.) Miss Keiko Okuda, a transfer from Keio University in Japan, is now back in Tokyo teaching Japanese to Christian missionaries. She was our second major to finish, and we miss her dearly in Korean class. Good luck to both of you, and don't forget to write (in English, please!).

4. On the subject of majors and minors, we would like to welcome the students who have elected a Linguistics program since last November. The new majors are Alice Fredericks, a freshman in the Honors College; Susan Meier, a freshman in Secondary Education; and Connie Pattinson, a junior in the General Curriculum. The new minors are Anita Capron, a senior in Secondary Education; Candy Hines, a sophomore in Secondary Education; Jadwiga Kwiatkowska, a freshman in Liberal Arts; Mary Nolan, a sophomore in Home Economics Education; Rosalie Rado, a sophomore in General Curriculum; Jean Robinson, a junior in Secondary Education; Darryl Salisbury, a senior in Liberal Arts; Pat Welch, a junior in Secondary Education; and John Zellers, a freshman in Secondary Education. Welcome to the program!

5. Our girl in Yugoslavia, Liga Abolins, has written two letters in the last six months to bring us up to date on the five Western graduate students who are studying at the University of Belgrade. The other four are Mary Anne Poggenburg, Eileen Ryan, Pete Hooker, and Pat Nichols--all of whom were students in the Basic Serbo-Croatian class last winter semester (1969). Here is a brief quote from Liga's letter: "Srpski je težak jeziks, i ja sam lenja. Ja sam još učila mnogo, ali to nije dosta. Ja volim da učim brzo ali ne volim da radim." That sounds like our girl, all right. Zdravo, drugarice.

6. The Linguistics courses will have some new faces next fall. We weren't budgeted for an additional full-time instructor, so we have begged and borrowed and stolen from other departments the people that we need. For example, Mr. Earl Herrick of the English Department faculty will teach Introduction to Linguistics;

Mr. Alexander Sohodski of the Russian faculty will supervise Basic Polish; and Mr. John Willis of the Anthropology faculty will teach Advanced Swahili. In addition, Mrs. Lalita Muižnieks, now completing her graduate work in Linguistics, will teach Linguistic Analysis. We are proud to have the services of these four individuals.

7. We would like to call your attention to the linguistic offerings in other departments for the fall semester 1970:

English Department

- 270 English Language (several sections)
- 574 Linguistics for Teachers (J. Malmstrom)

Physics Department

- 100 Acoustics (R. B. Miller)

Psychology Department (at Fort Custer)

- 597 Developmental Psycho-Linguistics (L. Kent)
- 597 Verbal Behavior (J. Michael)

Speech Department

- 302 Communicative Processes (several sections)
- 304 Physiological Processes (Z. York)

Speech Pathology and Audiology

- 202 Anatomy and Physiology (Lohr)
- 203 Speech and Language Development (Egland)
- 204 Phonemics (Seelig)

8. The Linguistics Department will offer the following general linguistics courses of its own in the Fall Semester 1970:

| <u>Number</u> | <u>Section</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Instructor</u> | <u>Days</u> | <u>Times</u> | <u>Room</u> |
|---------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| *110 | CA | Intro. to American English | Hendriksen | MW | 10:00-11:50 | 3312 Br. |
| 200 | FA | Linguistic Analysis | Muižnieks | TTh | 1:00- 2:50 | 3313 Br. |
| 300 | CA | Historical Linguistics | Palmatier | MW | 10:00-11:50 | 1108 Br. |
| 500 | IA | Intro. to Linguistics | Herrick | MW | 4:00- 5:50 | 3313 Br. |
| 510 | FA | Tchg. Eng. as For. Lang. | Hendriksen | MW | 1:00- 2:50 | 1108 Br. |

*Foreign students only.

Robert A. Palmatier
Editor